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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement*/ submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental
organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in
accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 June 2001]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received in English, from the submitting non-
governmental organization(s).

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of minorities living in oil producing areas

At the World Economic Forum, Davos, on 31 January 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan challenged world business leaders to "embrace and enact" the UN-Global Compact, both in their individual corporate practices and by supporting appropriate public policies. In a globalized world corporations become more and more responsible for the human rights situation in the areas where they conduct their business. Since over 10 years Society for Threatened Peoples has been monitoring the interlinkage between business behaviour and human rights violations all over the world but especially in volatile territories where ethnic or religious minorities live. Society for Threatened Peoples wishes to draw the UN-Sub-Commission's attention to cases where international oil companies promised to promote a higher standard of living for minorities in the area where oil or gas was found and produced. The contrary happened, gross violations of human rights occurred and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were also violated as in Sudan, Columbia and in China (in the Tibet Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region).

1. Human rights violations in Sudan:

One of the bloodiest and longest running wars in Africa is being fuelled by oil. How complicit are foreign oil companies? A year after an official Canadian delegation led by John Harker condemned foreign corporate complicity the human rights situation is still escalating. In the oilfields and surrounding areas, government forces and government sponsored militias are forcefully emptying the area of civilian. This is being tolerated by Companies such as Lundin, Petronas and CNPS. The offensive which will be necessary to take control of TotalFinaElf's concession will take the scorched earth close to the borders of Uganda and Kenya. Oil company infrastructure, including airstrips and oil roads are being used by government forces fighting in southern Sudan. This leads to increased fighting. Sudan is now exporting oil, the money earned thereby is funding the expansion of war. A new industrial complex in the north has been developed and reported to be used for dual civilian/military use. Defense spending has doubled. As a consequence of emptying the land of civilians there people can no longer live off their land, this is leading to acute food shortages and fears of famine.

2. Oil exploration on the traditional territory of the U'wa people

In 1992 the Colombian government has granted drilling rights to the international oil company Occidental Petroleum on the traditional territory of the U'wa people in Columbia. Occidental estimates that the region known as the Samoré Block, contains approximately 1, 5 billion barrels of oil. Already in 1997, Roberto Cobaría, the U'wa's elected leader at the time, was pulled from his bed in the middle of the night and heavily beat and assaulted. Oxy began construction of its first drilling site, known as Gibraltar 1 in early 2000. This project has already led to a dramatic increase in human rights violations and environmental destruction. In the past year, the U'wa homeland has become heavily militarized. In March 2000 three American activists and supporters of the U'wa were murdered in Araca by a guerrilla group. The U'wa fear that these murders and the assault on Roberto Cobaría are a harbinger of things to come if the oil project goes forward on their land. The U'wa warn that unless the project is cancelled, it will only bring further violence, environmental and cultural destruction, oil spills from guerrilla bombings and deforestation from new access roads.

3. Foreign investment in the Chinese Autonomous Regions of Tibet and Xinjiang.

International oil and gas companies are investing in the energy sector of the Chinese western regions of Tibet and Xinjiang. In talks with the state owned oil company PetroChina, BP Amoco has already begun negotiating its participation in the construction of a 4200km long pipeline from Xinjiang to Shanghai. As for the construction of further pipelines, Petro China is negotiating with international companies. In Xinjiang the Chinese authorities suppress every engagement of the

Uighurs for human rights and democracy. The machinations of PetroChina mean the transfer of tens of thousands of Chinese oil workers to Tibet and Xinjiang. While this may work for the Chinese the Tibetans and Uighurs suffer from a high unemployment rate and very low living standard. These demographic manipulations have already made Tibetans and Uighurs minorities in their own countries. Through its investment in PetroChina BP Amoco makes itself extremely untrustworthy. Since PetroChina will have to follow the firm politics of its parent company, the state-owned Chinese oil giant CNPC, BP Amoco will hardly be able to influence PetroChina's extraction methods. The Tibetan oil wells lie in the Kham and Amdo region, which were separated from Tibet and integrated into the Qinghai province by China in 1949. But the Tibetans continue to see these regions as parts of Tibet. Tibetan and Mongolian nomads have always lived in the Tsaidem Basin, where the oil is going to be extracted. But as a result of the systematic exploitation of the oil reserves that are important to Central China, the Tibetans' and Uighurs' religious and cultural traditions are endangered, their human rights are violated, while the Chinese leadership continues to propagate the "development" of Tibet and Xinjiang.

In order to put an end to these multiple denials of economic, social and cultural rights, The Society for Threatened Peoples asks the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights:

- To put pressure on the international oil companies concerned to reassess their operations in the territories mentioned with regard to the Global Compact process.
- To discuss the problem of no-go-areas, for instance Sudan for international oil corporations in the light of the Global Compact process.
- To find mechanisms making the principles of the Global Compact more binding for the international corporations.
